

Sarasota, FL -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) announced today that 12 students nominated by Buchanan have received an appointment to a U.S. Service Academy.

“I congratulate these outstanding young men and women for their appointments,” said Buchanan. “They should take pride in having successfully competed with so many students from across the country. It is an honor not only for them, but for all who have supported them along the way. I wish them the best of luck and have every confidence that they will serve our nation with honor.”

Each year, members of the House and Senate nominate senior high school students they represent for admission to the U.S. Air Force, Merchant Marine, Military and Naval academies. Applicants who meet strict qualifications are interviewed and recommended by a non-partisan Service Academy Board appointed by the Congressman.

The following students nominated by Buchanan received an academy appointment:

- Braden River High School student James Watson Bradin III of Palmetto was appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy
- St. Stephens High School student Joshua Gregory Breitwieser of Bradenton was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy
- Sarasota High School student James Garrett Custons of Sarasota was appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy
- Lemon Bay High School student Bryan Mark Golonka of Cape Haze was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy
- Manatee County Community College and home schooled student Nicholas Eldridge Gutsche of Sarasota was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy
- Hargrave Military Academy student Patrick Randall Mire of Bradenton was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy
- Venice High School student Max Smith of Nokomis was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy
- Riverview High School student Carlton Shelley II of Sarasota was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy
- Bradenton Christian School student Zachary James Denison of Bradenton was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy
- Bayshore High School student Nathan Thomas Whitehead of Bradenton was appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy
- Sarasota Military Academy student James Kenneth Taylor II of Sarasota was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy; and
- Ardrey Kell High School student Garrett Mark Poncin of Bradenton was appointed to the U.S. Merchant Marine

The U.S. Service Academies are four-year post-secondary institutions that combine educational excellence with military officer training. Students accepted to the academies receive a free four-year education in return for a commitment serve five-years in the active-duty military after graduation.

Buchanan will host a reception for the students at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2009 at the Community Foundation, 2365 Fruitville Road in Sarasota.